



MI AmeriCorps

The Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Newsletter

Winter 2005

“Getting Things Done”

AMER CORPS

Healthy Water, Healthy People

Michigan is the only state that does not have a uniform, state-wide regulatory sanitary code for installation and monitoring of onsite septic systems. Over the past year the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship AmeriCorps Program (MGSP) has partnered with the Northwest Michigan On-Site Wastewater Task Force to change this problem. This unique partnership will give AmeriCorps members an opportunity to meet their goals develop relationships with community leaders.

The purpose of the Task Force is to help make local officials aware of the most common sources of groundwater contamination, how to prevent or minimize contamination and pending changes in regulations concern-

ing on-site wastewater treatment systems that may affect homeowners.

Governor Granholm has made adopting a state code a high priority for her administration. The Task Force is part of a steering committee working to draft a code for consideration by the legislature.

The MGSP is designed to help individuals reduce the risks of groundwater contamination associated with pesticide and nitrogen fertilizer use. Home assessments and educational demonstrations are available free of charge.

Four MGSP members, Sarah Morin, Lisa Gruber, Adam

Schubel and Christy Roman will work with the Task Force to provide wastewater educational programs for community groups.



MGSP Members Sarah Morin, Adam Schubel, Christy Roman and Lisa Gruber

Explore, Experience, Achieve

As part of Michigan's AmeriCorps, Explore, Experience, Achieve Through 4-H Mentoring (EEA4-H) is helping to meet the goals of the Mentor Michigan initiative led by Governor Jennifer Granholm and First Gentleman Dan Mulhern. EEA4-H is already serving Michigan youth in seventeen counties. The goal of the program is to provide 1800 underserved Michigan youth with 600 positive, stable and caring adult mentors.

EEA4-H focuses on the structured matching of mentors to youth. Through this new program youth and adults are paired by their various interests, hobbies, activities and like-mindedness. By using the latest

mentoring research and materials 4-H has developed a program ensuring the mentor/mentee relationship is compatible for long term endurance and success.

4-H/MSU Extension has a long history of serving Michigan communities. EEA4-H is a continuation of over a hundred years of dedicated service to Michigan youth and families.

For more information about Explore, Experience, Achieve Through 4-H Mentoring, contact Program Leader/Director Julie Chapin at chapin@msu.edu or by telephone at (517) 432-7608.

Volunteer Muskegon's AmeriCorps Members Help Scare the Pants Off Local Residents

BOO! That's the sound of volunteers from the Youth Volunteer Corps of Muskegon County scaring people at the annual Shettler Haunted House. Each year, students from throughout Muskegon County volunteer at the Haunted House. This year's Haunted House started on Saturday, October 23rd and continued through the week until Halloween night.

AmeriCorps members supervised the youth volunteers each night while the Haunted House was open. All volunteers also had to attend an orientation before the run of the Haunted House in order to learn what all the opportunities were and sign up in advance for the characters they wanted to play. Various scary characters at the Haunted House included Leatherface, Jason

from the Friday the 13th movies, and Freddy from the Nightmare on Elm Street movies.



AmeriCorps member Amy Dillon helps Youth Volunteer Corps member Megan Estabrook attach a tarp as part of

This was the ninth year that owners John and Donna Dill have run the Haunted House. In addition to the Youth Volunteer Corps, the Greater Muskegon Area Jaycees also partnered and provided volunteers for this year's Haunted House. Volunteer Muskegon's AmeriCorps members, along with the Youth Volunteer Corps and the Jaycees, provided volunteers to help build various parts of the Haunted House, like the maze and

signs.

Admission for this year's Haunted House was \$6.00 for adults, \$3.00 for children, and children under 4 years old were free. Patrons received \$1.00 off admission with a canned good item. All canned good items were donated to the Salvation

Jimmy Carter Work Project 2005

Habitat for Humanity employees and volunteers are already working hard preparing for the 2005 Jimmy Carter Work Project build that will take place in Michigan on July 19-24. Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn will join with Habitat for Humanity volunteers to build hundreds of homes for Michigan families in need of adequate housing. The two-week event will be hosted by Benton Harbor and Detroit where 25 to 35 houses will be built in each city. In addition, houses will be constructed all over the state of Michigan by every Habitat affiliate. There will be an estimated 225 houses built in Michigan this July.

The amazing effort that is put forth during this week will give hundreds of families the opportunity to own a home. The AmeriCorps members serving Habitat for Humanity are "Getting Things Done" all over the state of Michigan for this project to be successful including selecting families in need of housing, recruiting and scheduling volunteers, and supervising construction sites.

To be a part of the 2005 Jimmy Carter Work Project this summer contact your local Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

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Ionia County AmeriCorps Team (ICAT)

Ionia County AmeriCorps Team's eleven members are currently working hard to promote service-learning and mentoring across seven different school districts including Ionia County and Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

During January's Mentor Month the team has been busy promoting mentoring program and

recruiting volunteers to support the programs. ICAT has a county-wide networking program that will take place in January for community members who support the areas children. First Gentleman Daniel Mulhern will be the guest speaker for this event; his focus will be the importance of mentoring.

City Year Detroit: I'm Ready Choose Me!

It is a place where you learn, as one member put it, "...that success is measured by those you touch and reach through service." This seemingly simple concept of service is the foundation upon which City Year Detroit builds a culture where the idealism of young people is encouraged and celebrated everyday. Designed as a model national service program, City Year unites idealistic young adults, ages 17-24, from diverse ethnic, socio-economic, racial, sexual orientation and educational backgrounds, for an academic year of full-time community service, leadership development and civic engagement.

City Year Detroit corps members serve in elementary and middle schools in the metro Detroit area, where they provide tutoring, mentoring, powerful after-school programs, and transformative community service initiatives. Corps Member Stacy Balsley gives an account of her experience through the program:

"Coming from a small community of two stoplights and a grocery store not open on Sundays, I didn't know a lot about life in a city the size of Detroit. I knew I wanted to make a differ-

ence in the lives of others, but I wasn't quite sure how to even begin. After college graduation, I discovered that City Year could provide the open door to make this difference possible.

I am seeing things everyday that I never would have seen had I not joined. Negative stereotypes about both Detroit and the people who live here were broken down in front of my very eyes as I tore down an abandoned house with fellow corps members.

I don't think there would be any way to put the City Year experience into words befitting what it does personally for each corps member. Each member came here to give back to the community of Detroit in their own way. Yet, each one of us is getting so much more out of it. What we give to the community of Detroit is incredible and moving, but what we get personally out of this experience is both indescribable and immeasurable." ~Stacy L. Balsley, Bremen, Indiana ~

City Year Detroit is always looking for more young adults who are ready to step up and answer the call! You can gain more information at www.cityyear.org or call directly 313 - 874 - 6825

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City Year Detroit members prepare for a service project with Greening of Detroit

Superior AmeriCorps Makes a Difference

The Superior AmeriCorps program celebrated Make a Difference Day on October 22, 2004 by giving Baraga School's forest trail in Pelkie, Michigan an extreme clean makeover. Due to infrequent use of the trail it had become badly overgrown to the point where the difference between weeds and nature's beauty was indistinguishable. As Superior AmeriCorps members took the time to clear the trail and spread fresh wood chips, they realized that if the trail was more informative it would be used more by the community. The program partnered with Baraga High School's wood shop students to make signs point-

ing out different types of plant species. With the help of many community volunteers the signs were painted and pictures were added, and placed on metal posts to be installed along the trail. This all took place despite a day of rainy weather! The work was enjoyable, especially knowing that we were making a difference. Even after their service project was complete a high school student continued to improve the trail by creating an interpretive booklet that gives detailed information about the species along the trail. In a day's service a lasting difference was truly made.



*Getting Things Done
For America*

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M I C H I G A N



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Fun Projects, Fun Times

Neighborhood Youth Development Members serve students in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, through Camp Fire USA. They run after school programs, reading and mentoring programs, and teach the Self Reliance curriculums in classrooms.

One AmeriCorps Member has even taken great time and energy to help the students at Burton Middle School create their very own school newspaper. She has even hired a "super staff" among the students to make sure that responsibilities are taken care of and things are run smoothly. This gives students a creative edge and a sense of leadership and commitment.

Another member, at Brookside elementary, spent months planning, writing scripts, and designing the set for a Christmas play. It was called "Christmas Around the World", and the students acted out scenes demonstrating how different countries around the world celebrate Christmas.

A final example of "getting things done" in our programs is a music class held at Brookside

Elementary. Brett Bielski, a very talented and congenial musician, takes the time to instruct the children in many aspects of music. He facilitates a program to inspire creativity and teamwork amongst the students. He records musical ideas (originated by the students) and builds on these ideas with the students' input. The end result of this work will be a CD recorded and produced by the students of Brookside Elementary; a superb example of students working together creatively towards a common goal.

With enthusiasm and dedication to the students we serve, we are striving to produce great results. Even if we can only reach a couple of children, it is a couple more than before. These children are OUR future, and we help them to realize this by giving them the confidence needed to pursue any dreams that they have. Most importantly everything takes place in a safe and structured environment. Together, without a doubt, we are accomplishing the tasks so many others choose to ignore. By doing this we are "getting things done"!

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